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INTEGRITY

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a copy

If
speak
with the
tongues
of men and
angels, and
have not
charity~
February, '48

~I am become
as sounding
brass or a
tinkling
cymbal.
= St. Paul

Subject ~
RADIO

Vol. 2, No. 5

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EDITORIAL



RADIO stands high in the list of regrettable modern inventions. We have destroyed the beauty of the world, robbed nature of its richness, eclipsed time, telescoped space and destroyed silence. It almost seems as though the worst of these terrible deeds is the destruction of silence. An endless stream of useless talk accompanies modern man, even into his once-private bedroom or out into his once-lonely desert hut. How will a man know God, knit himself together, grow in virtue, or even remain sane if he is never recollected, if he is not familiar and at home with silence?

Consider the mixed and unlovely motives which conspire to make radio possible. First of all there are the scientists, who are horrified at the children they have born. Modern scientists are usually aghast at their progeny (see how Einstein is upset about the atom bomb), not realizing their own responsibility in the matter. It is because scientists today are half-men, "pure" scientists who think they can follow their intellectual curiosity wherever it leads them, as though they were outside the orbit of the common good. It is because of this amoral view that the scientists end up inventing what serves the Devil's purposes.

Then there are the advertisers and the station-owners, motivated simply by avarice, and occasionally at odds with each other over their relative shares of the spoils.

The script writers, actors, announcers and other radio talent are the creatures of these avaricious masters, and are among the most degraded members of modern society.

And what about us listeners? What impurity of motive has made us partner to this unsavory business? We are not even partners. We are almost like sponsors. We support the whole structure, if not with our initiative, at least with our compliance. Wherever you find a mass of people corresponding with evil, look to their weakness rather than their malice. Only a few men take the trouble to be vicious. Most of us sin through weakness. So it is here. Radio saves us from the effort of thinking. It distracts us from the consideration of our sins. It helps us escape from our despair and maintain our lives on the superficial level from which we are afraid to descend.

So, shall we get rid of the radio? It is a foolish question. Would we could get rid of it, but it is not ours to get rid of. Furthermore, it exists only in consequence of our several sins. What we can do is to chop away at its foundations by the spiritual transformation of those involved at every level.

It ought not to seem odd that a movement of spiritual renaissance which might eventually bring about the atrophy of radio can nevertheless in good conscience use radio as one of its weapons. The fact that radio can serve good purposes does not justify radio. It merely proves that God can bring good out of evil.

Why has God allowed the radio to develop? Possibly only so we can turn it to the uses of spreading the Good News. The case is somewhat analagous to that of the Roman Empire which was established at such great human cost that Saint Augustine saw no way to justify it. Men united the ancient world for their own ignoble and unjustified ends. God used the unity they achieved for the spread of Christianity. The Roman roads became the paths of the Apostles. We should look upon radio channels as modern Roman roads, which men have unconsciously prepared for the new apostles, especially the lay apostles.

We need not whitewash the evil in radio because we propose to use radio. The radio channels belong to us, the people, and not to a handful of rich men or the manufacturers of cereals. The air belongs to all of us, but the proper use of it can only be made by apostles. Millions of people listen to the radio to escape from their despair. We must then really rescue them from despair, sending them the words of hope, not muddled, but clearly presented, so as really to touch and transform them.

THE EDITORS



Jack and the Magic Box

Junior Jack is a typical American boy.

He is a likeable chap—well-built for his fourteen years, even enough of temper, with a friendly though somewhat vacuous smile.

But Jack has one regrettable habit which bids fair to dominate, perhaps even to ruin, his life. Every day, hour after hour, under the eyes of his parents—yes, and with their approbation—he partakes of drugs, some stimulating, some narcotic, from a magic box.

Junior Jack is a radio addict.

The radio, says Jack, is his best friend. It is his most constant companion. It is also his clown, his soothing syrup, his nightmares, his teacher, and his moral arbiter. It calls to him from the living room of his and half a dozen other homes as he awakens; it prescribes his breakfast food and drinks; it hurries him off to school; it affords a subject for oral reports in his English and social studies periods; it takes him afternoons into adventures unattainable in the dull routines of classes; it makes conversation unnecessary—in fact, quite impossible—at the dinner table; it builds up sports heroes for his weekends; and in the long evenings it initiates him into the devious mysteries of many inner sanctums of horror, until he falls asleep to carry on in his subconscious the events whose growth has been started there.

"Junior Jack," boasts his mother, "is such a good, quiet boy. He never seems to get into trouble. And there isn't a popular program on the air that he can't tell you about."

Jack's acquaintance with the spell of the airwaves began early in life. When, in his babyhood, he would become restless, his mother would not feed him paregoric. No—that contained an opiate, and might injure the child's mental development; it might cause a susceptibility to harmful habits. Nor did she pick him up to comfort him. An eminent child psychologist had said in a book that mother mustn't handle her infant, lest she induce dependency complexes. Jack's mother had great respect for experts—and for what was printed in child-care books. But she reserved her greatest respect, educated modern that she was, for science; and what more wonderful invention has science concocted than the magic box that can reproduce instantaneously voices from ten or ten thousand miles away? Therefore Jack gurgled his first rhythmic da-da-di-da's to the sweet melodies and senseless lyrics song hits of the thirties.

When Jack was a bit older and able to chortle at the antics of daddy-reading-the-comics, he found his first radio friend. This was a synthetic uncle with a dear-little-kiddies manner and an obtrusive, mirthless laugh, who welcomed Jack into his numerous family of nephews,

announced his birthday on the air, and told him to be sure to wash hands before every meal. Now, how did the wonderful man who never set eyes on Jack know of his antipathy to soap? This un-
"uncle" was more real to little Jack than many of his blood relatives. Jack demanded to have him tuned in; he listened to his patronizing gaiety and his smooth counsels with a regularity and an attentiveness which he did not accord to the words of his parents.

Jack's mother used to have her teatime friends tiptoe in to see the youngster listening and laughing with the airwaves. His father, meanwhile, was immensely gratified that his son had been born to the advantages of the radio age. He himself had grown up on a farm, and had gone through the struggles and satisfactions of the crystal-set-and-phones period. How fortunate was his son, who would have only to turn a knob, and presto—the genie!

When he was at the age to begin school, Jack participated in his first broadcast. He was taken to witness a much-bemedaled fairy program. There he and several hundred other innocents—many of whose elders would have considered it unethical to "indoctrinate" them in the tenets of religion—were put through the goosesteps of a gullibility demonstration. A benign gentleman, noted also for his impersonations of a United States' president, rehearsed the children before airtime in the ostensibly spontaneous responses which they were to make on the broadcast. These consisted largely in shouting the name and echoing the praises of the sponsor's product as part of a "game" known to wiser ears as a "commercial." The children did their share heartily and thought it great fun. Thereafter Jack experienced a certain proprietary attitude toward radio, feeling much as the fascinated spectator at a play who knows how it will end but wonders what course it will take to the hearth of doom.

Thereafter, also, at Jack's insistence, his mother switched his usual breakfast food to the very similar product which her son had been privileged to help advertise.

Another year or two, and Jack was selecting his own programs, giving his own commands to the spirit of the magic box. In this matter, and this made him cherish the box the more dearly, his watery parents allowed him to display his manhood at the age of seven. Strange how they fussed about his orange juice and cod liver oil and spinach; how they supervised his wearing apparel for coolness in summer and dry warmth in winter; how they took precautions against germs and injury in the home and installed safety devices on his bike; how worried when a maid lost her temper in front of him; and yet they let him pick his own radio fare!

Junior Jack didn't express much individuality when he turned the dial. He headed straight for the programs which all the boys in

and the next higher grade were talking about. A switch of the fingers, and his respectable living room was transformed every afternoon, in quick succession, into a malevolent jungle, a crook's hideout, a Nazi spy headquarters, a cliff over which the hero was about to crash. And Jack wasn't alone; in fact, he wasn't Jack. The radio uncle had been replaced by a horde of heroes with whom Jack identified himself. There was the boy with the courageous heart and the faculty of getting into and out of desperate jams; the man with the incredible plane, always appearing out of nowhere in emergencies; the masked rider with a horse like a tornado; the young detective who could always outguess the officers of the law; the super-man who could fly and whom no bullet could pierce.

Day after day, while his careful mother prepared his lamb chops (broiled, not greasy fried!) and his potato (baked, with all the minerals intact) and his peas (in the pressure cooker, to save the vitamins), Junior Jack, engrossed in his magic box, was letting things be done to him of which his parents had no inkling.

There were, of course, certain superficial effects of his listening which bore themselves home on his mother. A four-inch metal star on a pin, which proclaimed him a member of a secret brigade, tore rusty holes in his polo shirts. He sent away coins and box tops for whistles, telescopes, and model planes. He organized, under the tutelage of a radio boy hero and a cereal company, a short-lived club of future champions, who wore armbands, ran races, and ate the cereal that would make them mighty. He switched from the fairy-tale porridge to a vitamin-packed dry breakfast food and a vitamin-rich milk fortifier. "Well," thought his parents, "as long as he eats well, and the foods he chooses are such well-known, well-advertised, standard brands—!"

What the magic box was really doing to Jack, under the surface, no one knew,—or particularly cared. He was growing up in a paradoxical era when meticulous attention was ministered to the physical and material wants of a child, but the needs of his intellect and his soul were guardedly left as his own concern. Jack listened to his radio at will—and

He learned how to crack a safe before he rightly knew what a safe was.

He learned about marijuana cigarettes.

He learned how to wreck a car and cripple a plane.

He learned dozens of clever ways of causing death to unsuspecting victims.

He learned how to act like a gentleman though the gun still smoked in one's pocket.

Now, lest you should interpose that this knowledge has not hurt Jack, because he has not put any of it to use (although there are on

record some dozen recent radio-inspired violent juvenile crimes)) us note also some of the attitudes, the philosophical conclusions, which he acquired from his radio listening. His parents have always kept him away from religious and moral instruction, lest it "influence his freedom of thought"; but the children's radio, with its consistent patterns and premises, has not been so considerate.

From the magic box Jack had his first lessons in race hatred. This was after Pearl Harbor, and there was a war on. All the villains in the five-o'clock dramas were guttural, staccato-voiced Germans, or "so-so" Japanese. Jack and his nine-year-old pals came to regard with paternalistic suspicion anyone who clamped his English speech with a foreign accent. Wickedness was associated in their minds with certain men and with alien names and speech. The transferable generalizations about foreigners at which they subconsciously arrived, have since been the basis for the pointed "tolerance" programs to budge.

Junior Jack also absorbed very definite ideas about good and evil.

Bad people are invariably more intricate, more picturesque, more clever than the good. In the serials which he assiduously followed, often hearing two or three simultaneously by a quick clicking of the knobs, the sheriffs and the accredited officers of the law were generally stupid and vain. The criminals had the most initiative and resource; they used their brains. The heroes, private individuals who arrived in the nick of time to save the law from a beating, would not have amounted to much had they not had extraordinary accoutrements—an infallible charger, a cloak for invisibility, a not-quite-human friend. Mere human virtue was no match for human vice.

When one day, on his way home from school, Jack was waylaid by two older children with a knife, he was thoroughly frightened but not too much surprised. They were bringing his "real life" of the radio to earth. Events like that had been happening every day in his ears.

For Jack had also discovered, though he never put it into words, that the world of the classroom and the home was utterly dull in comparison with the world of the ether. By the time he sat down to eat his lamb chops and peas, he was seething with dramatic incidents truncated just before the startling climax. "Listen in to tomorrow's thrilling episode . . . !" There was enough horror and suspense to keep him to his seat all night and anticipating all through the next day's arithmetic and social studies.

Junior Jack's parents have been very modern, very "psychological" about his upbringing. They have never threatened him or punished him, because "fear should have no place in a child's environment," to quote again the book on child-care. When his grandmother died, they told him she had "moved away," and of course he was not allowed to attend the funeral. So early an experience of death, they argued,

might warp his personality and thwart his natural development. They might have foregone their precautions. Under their very eyes, while he was behaving admirably in the living room, Jack from his magic box was stuffing himself to numbness with death and with fears.

* * *

Jack is now fourteen, a dreamy, lackadaisical chap, and more dependent than ever on his box.

True, he has become cynical from experience about some of his former favorites. Occasionally he will tune in on one of the super-detectives who used to command his admiration. He will hear a spiel on American justice—how the accused is always innocent until guilt is established. (The boys' serials have gone in for uplift of late.) Then the commercial: "If your grades in school are slipping, switch to K—Breakfast Food." "Hokum," says Jack, to both uplift and plug.

Or he will hear a script against prejudice, melodramatic and moralistic, ending with the inducement that consumers of the sponsor's product will grow like the bright stars of baseball. Jack has been faithful to that cereal for five years, first from credulity, then from acquired taste; but he still can't hit past the pitcher. "Hokum!" he says again, to both moral and sales talk.

But in spite of this air of superiority to kid stuff, Junior Jack has nestled ever closer to the voice in the box. He takes sports by day and horror by night—both in large doses. His radio life is so exciting that he needs little else of adventure, and nothing at all of achievement to satisfy that restless urge of the normal mortal.

His parents are proud that he is "manly" enough to hear the sports broadcasts. And hear them he does, from warm-up to curtain call! He knows the players on every team, the fluctuating batting averages, the combination of wins and losses to bag a pennant. He leaps and beats the air when Army makes a touchdown.

But Junior Jack is no athlete. Sandlot baseball, the moguls grieve, is disappearing, not only because there are fewer available lots, but because the boys are loitering elsewhere. At their radios, for example; just where Jack, with his flabby muscles and flabbier will, is seated.

Once Junior Jack almost got into trouble with his father over the play-by-play broadcasts. He had heard every home run, every no-hit pitching stint, glorified with the name of a cigarette or a beer or an ale; and, one day when he was twelve, he and a few classmates went on a binge. They drank a little and they smoked a lot, true to the announcer's advice to relax by lighting-up.

"You'll stunt your growth—you'll shorten your wind—you'll never be an athlete if you smoke," remonstrated Father.

"Aw, Dad," said Jack, "you listen to the games on the air. Base-

ball—the great American sport—what all American boys dream of. And what do they advertise? Smokes and brew. Can't be as bad as you think."

When Jack's father read, shortly after, that over forty-five per cent of the ninth-graders in his son's school smoked, he dropped the subject. The sportscaster was admittedly a homespun philosopher, stressing the finest in athletic morale; even if he did urge his audience to solve their difficulties with tobacco. And, after all, a lad has to be adaptable in this changing world!

When there are no football, baseball, or boxing matches on the air to keep his emotions churned, Junior Jack turns to the horror programs—no longer the daytime hair-breadth adventure series for children but the full-fledged hair-raising adult crime and mystery pieces. A recent national survey has shown that the going-to-bed time of American youngsters has receded over one and a half hours in the past few years, the cause being the desire to listen to programs never intended for children. Gang-busters, district attorneys, strange doctors, prison wardens, and self-elected detectives vie valiantly but hopelessly with the weird but fascinating assemblage of psychotic murderers, night after night, for the interest of children whose parents make great sacrifices that they may live in nice neighborhoods and associate only with the scions of nice families.

Junior Jack now has his radio, table model, stationed between his desk and his bed. His mind has, like Macbeth's, become so steeped in blood that he counts that half hour lost which does not count for four or five homicides. He listens in during homework, and while he is trying to fall asleep. Sometimes for variety he turns to comedies, sputtering gags for the low-average mass mind; or to the raucous nightclub rhythms of name bands; or to family comedies in which the father is always the butt, and the irresponsible teen-agers always come out on top. But on the whole he finds the suspense-chillers more satisfying. Now that one of his favorite networks is holding its adult crime programs until nine-thirty, Jack will have to wangle a later retiring hour.

No smuggled narcotic could give to Junior Jack more lurid dreams or more complete escape from life as it is, than he openly takes from his magic box.

But because the criminal always gets caught, and because the law never condones flagrant immorality as many books do, Jack's parents are not disturbed. Isn't radio one of the most remarkable achievements of a wonderful scientific era? And don't all the boys and girls listen?

* * *

The most important business of a child's life should be his education—his preparation, at home and in school, to live his life well.

save his soul. The machine age has eliminated many of the chores which used to keep children busy and give them an early sense of usefulness. It has also, because of the immeasurable new complications of living, increased vastly the amount which a child must learn, in order that he may be master of his new tools and may find his way to salvation through the bewildering mazes of industrial living.

Junior Jack has a high I.Q. The oft-cited barriers to education, malnutrition, crowded living, domestic insecurity, etc., have happily been absent from his experience. But Jack has gained very little from his eight years of schooling. His marks are low, and his accomplishments are even lower.

Jack has never learned how to study. The magic box has seen to that. He boasts that he can do his homework and listen to Bob Hope at the same time. And indeed he does scribble off a composition now and then, or get the drift of a page of biology. But actually the opposing simultaneous pulls on his faculty of attention leave it paralyzed. He had to drop foreign language study—flunked out because he could not concentrate sufficiently to memorize declensions and vocabulary. His math is spotted with errors—"careless mistakes," the results of mental absenteeism. He can bluff through English and civics with his radio-acquired lingo and his fund of current events generalities, although his achievement tests fail to correlate with his apparent oral intelligence. The art of learning by an application of will and intellect is a closed secret to Junior Jack. He is in the miserable position, educationally, of having many images drifting through his receptive mind but of knowing, definitely, **nothing**.

The theories of modern education, if taken seriously, would allow small space for the instructional performance of radio as it is today. Learning by doing—activity programs—are the educational shibboleths of the hour. How much does Jack *do* with his ear to the loud speaker? How does he *learn*? Is not his mind, his whole consciousness, like a rubber ball that is being tossed about on the airwaves, and perhaps even being carried off into the ether?

When Jack gets to class, he is not only unprepared, he is generally also absent. After an evening of mystery theater and inner sanctum. error, spelling and fractions are naturally drab pickings. Jack sits through the routine pleasantly, quietly; seemingly relaxed, though actually far away. Perhaps he is relishing the ingenious chicanery by which last evening's hooded maniac disposed of his victims; the patterns of these melodramas are always the same, but the details of plot and environment are often quite original. Perhaps he is considering placidly how the gray monster would eliminate Teacher without leaving a clue. At any rate, he never really pays attention. For, no matter how hard he tries to dramatize the lesson, no matter how adeptly she introduces

visual aids, no matter how charming or sympathetic her bearing, Teacher cannot hope to be as entertaining or as thrilling as Great Gildersleeve or Doctor Weird.

Some of Jack's teachers have been aware of the radio-made effect on his personality. But they have scarcely fingered the project counteracting it. The Herculean task, multiplied by thirty-five Jacks in every class, has reduced them to impotence.

Occasionally, they have made needle-in-a-haystack efforts, by tuning in on educational programs during school hours. These have been mostly scripts on the wonders of science and the perseverance against-medieval-superstitions displayed by its pioneers, and forums on contemporary affairs in which children who knew little were encouraged to express their opinions on the solutions to world problems. Not much red meat there to tempt Jack's mind from the luscious fare with which it was preoccupied!

More generally, Jack's teachers have bowed to his magic box. To appear up-to-date and to give the pupils an opportunity for self-expression, they have assigned composition topics like "My Favorite Radio Comedian," and have arranged conversation periods on "Bing Crosby versus Sinatra." In these sessions, Jack's teachers have avoided criticizing programs or trying to talk the pupils into better radio taste; the expert teacher of today must not be dogmatic, must allow children ostensible freedom in arriving at conclusions, and must not—ah, *never*—betray the ivory-tower attitude, in this era of progress, by suggesting that a child's consumption of radio fare may quickly reach the point of harmful excess.

Junior Jack is not much interested in the radio correlation attempted at school. He'd rather listen to his box than talk about it. But he thought the teachers were swell when they let him take a peep into school last October. They showed what good sports they were by suspending instruction and listening in with him and his classmates to the World Series.

* * *

Radio has its utilitarian and its aesthetic values. It can keep one forewarned of the weather; it can bring him news of moment; it can let him hear what the President says to Congress; it can enlighten and instruct; it can offer pleasing relaxation; it can reproduce the cleansing beauty of great music and great drama.

But, like atomic energy, radio must be bent to the needs of man and not loosed to destroy his children.

Radio today, along with the movies and the comics, is the opiate of youth. Attempts to remedy this situation have been feeble and sporadic.

Men in the field of radio are, in general, not too happy about their effect on a million Junior Jacks. They have an apologetic air about "What are we going to do? We've got to give the kids what they want!" or "Heck, we have a living to make. You find us new sponsors, and" There the subject hits the barbed wire.

Parents, who really could get at the base of the trouble, also do little. If they don't like Jack's programs, they buy him a separate radio so that he won't disturb the rest of the family. They cannot buck the spirit of the mob; everyone else's children are listening in; then why make their Jack different? Fitting-in-with-the-group is the most honored child quality in many progressive schools. Committees for the betterment of children's movies and radio have justly complained of the indifference of parents. The mood of the age has mothers and fathers paralyzed.

Most educators, instead of taking vigorous action about Jack's air-wave lethargy, are compromising with the circumstances. Because they find Junior Jack disinclined to settle down to concentrated study, they give him little or no homework; they water down his class activity, expecting of him no real mental exertion; they hand him passing marks to keep him free from the sense of failure and make him happy; for him and his like they turn sectors of the school from institutions of learning into kindergartens for teen-agers.

And Junior Jack, thoroughly bored with life as it is, goes home and demands of his magic box: "Quick! Get me Boston Blackie!"

HELEN M. MCCADDEN



Twenty box-tops Johnny mails

In fairly good condition.

The box-tops bring a shooter's badge,

The contents—malnutrition!

Preaching the Gospel – 1948 Style

It used to be fashionable among writers on religious topics to produce fanciful essays on not-too-impossible situations. "If Christ came to Chicago" was a favorite. "If I were one of the Twelve" was another. The fashion has not lasted. Not, at least, in England. I sincerely hope that it has not lasted in America. And this for two reasons. First, because the idea was based upon a misconception (Christ *is* in Chicago; we *are* all apostles.) Secondly, there are so many real events to write about that it is criminal to waste paper on fantasies.

It seems to me that the most colorful imagination of the 19th century could not have constructed a setting more remarkable and more attractive than that which now to the Catholic radio speaker is commonplace. Imagine. Our Lord Himself never used miraculous powers in order to enable Him to address a larger audience than could be reached by the natural voice. Have you ever thought that the modern radio apologist has an advantage which Christ did not allow even Himself?

That is a solemn thought. Solemn as anything is solemn which suggests responsibility. Look at it this way. Everyone realizes that Christ Lord chose conditions for His coming and His ministry which were humanly speaking, as unpropitious as wisdom could conceive. Exactly that. His poverty and social insignificance. His friendship with the unimportant and unscholarly; He chose just the type that a Bishop rejects among candidates for seminary training, men like the Cicerone of Ars. Clearly Christ the Son of God does not disdain natural gifts God gives them. Equally clearly He did not use the most remarkable of them for His own apostolate. They were to be ear-marked, so to say, for the use of later apostles. Hence our responsibility. Are we using these gifts?

Radio is such a gift. It is not a miracle. It is not any longer even something strange. It is very ordinary. All too ordinary. And we shall have more and more of it. Bigger radios. Louder radios. Super radios. We might have—this is unlikely, yet it is the whole reason for this article—BETTER radio.

The first consideration of the Christian broadcaster must be the methods of making this medium more attractive and more powerful as a vehicle of Christian thought and teaching. There are certain considerations which may help toward achieving this high purpose.

Problem number one—if I may pose it thus—is how to reduce the number of listeners. No, that is not a printer's error. In case you may still think it is, I shall repeat it. The first problem is how to reduce the numbers of the radio audience. That is of primary importance. At present far too many people listen to far too many programs. What

only another way of saying that too many people listen to none. If a man or, to be more practical, a woman has her radio tuned in all day long, it is obvious that she will give only the smallest attention to what she hears. The sponsors of programs know that. It is for this reason, I take it, that most programs begin so noisily.

People have to be educated out of indiscriminate listening. We know that it can be done with music. It can be done also with religion. Take the devotee of "swing," the man who boasts of not being "high-brow" and likes his music "hot." You can teach him (if you are very patient) that good is not another word for boring where music is concerned. You may have to be indulgent. You will almost certainly have to throw Gounod to a Hollywood star before the swing-fan will listen. But, if you persevere, he will listen to classical melodies untroubled and even when sung by a mere prima donna. What is more important, the day will come when he won't automatically switch off real music. Much more important still, the day will come when he will instinctively and, perhaps, angrily switch off Kate Whatever-her-name-is. Do you see what I am suggesting?

While all this indiscriminate, unselective, unremitting listening is unchecked there is little hope of recruiting an interested, that is, a worth-while audience. And the only way to train listeners to switch off silly programs is to produce something so well worth-while that the most jaded will realize how jaded they have become. They will be disgusted with themselves and the third-rate fare which has satisfied them for so long.

Now, the thoughtful reader—if I may flatter myself to the extent of believing that anyone thoughtful has read this far—will make an obvious rejoinder. "If," he will object, "listeners are allergic (horrible word!) to all programs, how can we ever gain a hearing for our worth-while performance?" An excellent point. Let me deal with it.

Let no one think that after one splendid appearance before a microphone he will have all America talking and awaiting with burning impatience the next opportunity of hearing the golden voice. Things just don't happen that way. The more usual history of the case is this: You prepare your first script with meticulous care. Form and content make the whole polished product like Walt Whitman written for broadcasting by Raymond Gram Swing. You re-read it until you know it by heart. You re-read it aloud until your family and friends know it by heart. You continue to recite the more deathless paragraphs of your prose until you lose all your friends. Then you submit the script to the producer. This illiterate promptly strikes out the perfect passages. He is, of course, kind. He says that you show promise. "Take this away," he says, "and re-write it. I can't promise that it will be accepted. But you certainly show promise . . . yes, very, very promising. . . .

What's that? . . . No, there's no hurry. Take your time. Let's have something, say, next spring or fall. No, I think if I were you I'd choose some other subject. Pardon me? . . . Oh, why certainly, we have no objection if you submit this script to the Columbia Broadcasting System. . . ."

Eventually you do arrive on the air. You are chastened. You realise that not every fool can broadcast. You have to be a very particular kind of fool. And you are not expecting to arouse any interest in the message you propose to deliver. You are, in fact, quite humble. In other words you are in precisely the mood in which you may be capable of being used by God to do His work. The humble approach is necessary for two reasons. Only the deferential will win an audience (this, incidentally, is not true of comedians, but I am not, at the moment, trying to help budding Bob Hopes). Secondly, only humble people feel the need to give the time and energy required for a good script.

Now to return to the thoughtful reader's dilemma. If we want to induce people to stop listening to rubbish and if, *ex hypothesi*, the same people are in fact listening without attention when we take the air, how is it possible to gain their ears for ourselves and train them to turn their deaf ear to the futile or even undesirable broadcasters? The answer is: patience and hard work. A word, first, about hard work.

It is much easier to go onto a platform or stage (and far more easy still to enter a pulpit) than to sit in front of a microphone. It is essential to realize that fact. The inexperienced will believe almost certainly the reverse to be true. After all, he reasons, there is not the strain of memory nor the embarrassment of appearing in the sight of the audience critical of pose, clothes and gesture. That is true. But as every public speaker knows, pose, clothes and gesture are rather more than half the battle in any auditorium. The visual aids, in other words, which may, indeed, be the reason for losing the battle (even a speaker does battle with his audience for their attention and sympathy) is much more commonly the reason for victory. The appealing look, the rich but sparing gesticulation, are considerable assets. There are no assets for the broadcaster save his matter and his voice.

His matter must be first class. Second-rate matter may be good enough for the audience who have no choice but to listen (especially if they have paid for admission) and who have, as we have said, the air to listening which any able orator provides. On the radio only the best is sufficiently good. If your talk does not grip, there are fifty other talks lurking all around the dial of the radio set, all crying out to be given a trial. Unless you can compel attention from the very first moment you will never be allowed by the restless listener to complete a single paragraph. That is why the first few words are vital. Start your hearers. Shock them. Rouse them. Do anything you like with

them but MAKE THEM WANT TO GO ON LISTENING TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY. That is where the hard work comes in. You may have a brilliant idea. You have to clothe it in brilliant phrases. The girl with a comely form chooses her clothes with jealous care. Because she is beautiful she does not on that account believe herself to be exempt from the need of making her clothes attractive.

Never presume that anyone (besides yourself) likes to hear you talk. Presume, rather, that nobody really wants to hear you. You are on trial for a few fleeting seconds before being rejected. Put all you know into that first sentence and into those first words of the first sentence. Then you may retain another two or three thousand listeners. Among them may be just the one for whom God intends your message—or, rather, His. If that thought is too sobering, you will be restored to cheerfulness by the following story which I tell, with great pleasure, against myself.

Some months ago I was to broadcast a series of talks to the English public. As you know, we have only one system of broadcasting. This has enormous disadvantages for minority bodies. They so rarely are allotted a share of air. Yet it has this advantage that when, for example, a priest is broadcasting the public have either to listen to him or to switch off. I suppose that many, if not most, switch off. So I decided that I should try shock tactics. I dared them to switch off. My talk started with these words: "He's going to talk about religion—switch him off. . . ." That, I thought, was original and arresting. How right I was. After I had been speaking for two minutes the Director of Programs rushed into the studio to tell me that I had been "off the air" since my opening phrase. It transpired that one of the B.B.C. engineers took my words to be the Voice of Authority and promptly plunged the whole country in silence. A pleasant experience for the country but not for me. To be honest, the story is not so much against myself as I suggested. The odd mistake of the unfortunate engineer received nationwide publicity. Reporters were sent down to me to inquire what it felt like to be cut off (as though I had suffered amputation . . . but reporters are like that) and the result was that for the remainder of my series I had thousands of extra listeners.

It is perhaps unnecessary to add that what I describe above was merely a stunt. The essence of a stunt is that it is tried only once in living memory. Don't misunderstand me. I have no patent or copyright for the idea. But I should not like all broadcasting readers to resolve to try out the scheme. If from every radio station at the beginning of Catholic Hour the speaker were to begin with an exhortation to switch off, it might happen that the communist hand would be detected. I might find myself summoned to Washington by the committee investigating un-American activities. Now I come to think of it,

a trip to the warmth and plenty of Washington would not come altogether amiss. . . .

The next point about the hard work involved in preparing a script for broadcasting is to work with a definite object. I take for granted that your ultimate object is good. I take for granted, that is, that you are working to bring God to His creatures and His children to a knowledge of God. What must you do? You must entice your hearers without telling them (at least immediately or too directly) that you want to do them good. Being done-good-to is the one friendly act that everyone resents. What you have to do—pardon me for the third repetition—is compel people to listen even when they are wanting badly to turn you off. Your job, if you are to accomplish anything, can be expressed in a single word. The word is so vital that I write it in capitals—ENTERTAIN. If you hope to achieve anything in the things which really matter, you have to be in no way second in entertainment value to any non-religious broadcaster.

Forgive me if I say a word about entertainment. You are misinformed if you imagine that entertainment means only The Sun, The Morning and The Moon at Night. It means that and far more. There is entertainment value in the tragedy no less than in the comedy, in the thriller no less than in the farce, in wisdom no less than in wit-cracking, in religion no less than and much more, very much more than in vaudeville. The real difficulty is that religious sects, with their very serious dogmatic message though with abundant good will, have made the mistake of thinking to attract the thoughtless to the things of God by using light, not to say facetious, language. In Great Britain we call it "being matey." Don't be matey. Don't be cheap. Don't be funny. When an actor in tragedy attempts hilarity the play becomes a cross between melodrama and farce. When a religious broadcaster tries to "come down to the listener's—pagan listener's—level" he sounds ridiculous or disgusting according to the listener's outlook. But he does not become entertaining. He does not win a second hearing. He does not help the cause.

If I had to make a criticism of Catholic broadcasting—and this is no more and no less valid as a criticism of broadcasting in the United States than anywhere else—it would be that too little attention is given to technical perfection. Not enough training is giving to prospective broadcasters. In the colleges there are courses in public speaking. Intelligent students know that it is just as necessary to be trained to speak as to write or conduct a lawsuit. But it is too readily assumed that the technique of broadcasting is just public speaking through a microphone. It is just the reverse. It is private speaking through a microphone. My advice to those who hope to become good radio speakers is to listen each day to one good broadcaster. Then write

criticism. Tell yourself on paper where you think the speaker scored and where he could have been improved. Write down the things which struck you most. You will discover that the really first class broadcaster says very little. But he says it often and differently. He repeats without appearing to repeat. He is even-toned without being monotonous. He is unhurried but is not wearily slow. His tones, inflexion, speed are varied. The most important thing he has to tell (the thing he is highly paid to tell) is told almost in confidence. It is mildly mentioned at the beginning of the talk, comes in very appositely halfway through and is almost forgotten just before the end. But only almost. The real thing is just remembered where it will remain longest in the listener's mind. Do study the technique of the best commercials. And I mean study. Analyze, re-write, improve, copy! Pretend that you are going to be paid fifty thousand dollars to sell a new cocktail-mixer to the thirsty American public. Wouldn't you go to endless trouble to write the perfect script? Aren't you trying to sell something more precious to that same public which suffers from a far more important thirst?

REV. JOHN C. HEENAN
Hampstead, England



TRIBUTE TO GENIUS

To men who made the radio,

My hat I gladly doff,

But low I bow to him who made

The switch to shut it off.

The Good News – Plain and Sugared

"If he had overcome his flesh, if he had mortified his appetite, he had chosen the austerities that refine like a pure flame, he would have something of the power, purity, of a child. He would still be able to effect a communion with heaven, through his contacts on earth. Perhaps his wife would not have left him *if his caress had not lost power to communicate love.*"

So says Caryll Houselander about one of the characters in *The Dry Wood*.

If we abuse the gifts and talents and faculties God has given us, corrupting them with habits of insincerity, our faculties will not prove suitable instruments for a changed will and a new sincerity. This is true as applied to intellectual and creative gifts as it is applied to physical faculties. If we use our oratorical or literary or poetic or artistic gifts insincerely (giving people what they want, which is not what they ought to want, or shuffling relative values, or writing someone else's ideas which are not also our ideas, or subordinate our gifts to an advertiser's end), then our gifts are not fit instruments for noble and sincere purposes. Those who have been writing singing commercial songs needn't try a hymn to Our Lady. Those who have been drawing Pictures of the Stations of the Cross. Don't think that because someone writes well for Coca Cola, or contributes to *The Saturday Evening Post*, or edits *The Reader's Digest*, that he can write the Gospel according to N.B.C.

The generality of contemporary artists and writers has so prostituted its talents that it is better to look among amateurs for someone to convey a great message. This is not because lack of polish is in itself a virtue but because freshness and purity can at least convey a great idea, whereas abused powers cannot.

All this philosophizing has its application in the field of religious radio. It helps explain why a much-lauded program, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, is very bad, and why another, less-auspiciously launched program, *The Hour of Saint Francis*, is very excellent indeed.

The Two Programs

The Greatest Story Ever Told is a half-hour Sunday evening coast-to-coast network dramatization of the Gospels. It is sponsored by Goodyear Tires, which omits its commercial, and is written by Fulton Oursler, who is at present a senior editor of *The Reader's Digest*. He is a convert to the Catholic Church of several years standing.

The Hour of Saint Francis is an apostolic venture conceived and executed by a Franciscan priest. It is a fifteen-minute dramatic program showing the ideals of Saint Francis in their application to modern life. Recorded in Hollywood, it is offered as a sustaining program by W

over one hundred local stations in the United States and Canada. The expense is carried by members of the Third Order of Saint Francis. Ideas for the program come from Franciscan priests and members of the Third Order, and are written in script form by several professional Hollywood writers who have a facility for grasping the ideas, and by several tertiaries without previous script-writing experience. Before each recording the actors and actresses kneel and pray, so we can suppose that they regard this assignment as more than a chance to make money. Their acting is excellent.

The Vernacular and the Vulgar

Both these programs want to popularize religion. One understands how this must be done in our day, the other does not.

It can be laid down as a general rule almost without exception that the *historical* Christ, as historical, will not win contemporary hearts. Religious drama that is heavy with Palestinian lore, bearded men and flowing garb, merely confirms men's suspicion that Christianity is an old and dead thing, a musty relic in a bright new day of progress. What men must be shown is the *living* Christ: Christ Who is present in the Macy's which ignores Him (and can kindle the fire of His love there), Christ present to and in the derelicts of the Bowery, and at the elbow of the Park Avenue divorcee; Christ redeeming and saving and loving and transforming in the midst of a secular world.

The Franciscans have caught this principle exactly. Almost all their settings are contemporary and true to life. They build their programs around such characters as a thirty-nine-year old secretary, single and lonely, a couple of atom-bomb scientists at work in a desert shed at night, a successful business man coming into Grand Central Station on the Twentieth Century Limited, or a fussy housekeeper who doesn't want to take care of a cancerous relative. Once in a while a script is set in thirteenth-century Assisi, but usually even then with a modern note. One such was about the Gallepo Poll conducted by the star reporter of the *Assisi Blade* to increase circulation. In 1181 he asked: Who is the most popular man in Assisi? Unanimous answer: Francis Bernardoni. A year later he asked: Who is the most unpopular man in Assisi? and got the same answer (Francis had just become a beggar). Twenty years later the now widely-circulated *Blade* inquired far and wide for the most popular man in the world—who turned out to be, of course, Francis of Assisi.

But in general the scripts hug the contemporary scene. The authors are especially to be commended on the script about the thirty-nine-year old secretary, lonely and weary of life, whose name might be legion. This one makes her way to the roof of the office building to kill herself and there meets Saint Francis (he conveniently appears and disappears

as ragged Brother Francis in these scripts) who explains that she would do well to lose her life but not in the way she's contemplating.

There is none of this intense relevance to modern life in *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. When we encounter the man with a superabundance of grain whose life is about to be required of him he is just a two-thousand-year old Semite with shades of nineteenth century religious art and the magazine section of the Hearst Sunday paper. Yet how easily he might have been a successful stockbroker about to retire from margin dealings.

Where Fulton Oursler has failed to contemporize he has tried to popularize by putting some of the conversation in the vernacular. No wonder if he really had put modern conversation into the mouths of ancient characters the effect would have been weird. He has done worse than that. He has speckled his scripts with the hackneyed phrases and clichés of the soap opera and the feature article. In consequence, he has been justly accused of vulgarization. A few phrases will suffice to show how ludicrous it is. Imagine Saint Joseph speaking to Mary about "your baby and my baby," or telling her "Oh, it's good to see you smile!" See what indignity is visited on Anne and Joachim by having them say, "The Angel Gabriel appearing to my daughter! Will you ever get used to it?" It's corn, straight out of the soap opera.

Fulton Oursler doesn't mean to be vulgar, or sentimental or almost blasphemous in his familiarity (as it sometimes seems). There is no reason to doubt his sincerity. But he has spent a lifetime with Grade B novels, with magazine articles calculated to attract circulation and with the Rotarian sentimentality of the digest magazines. His pen falls into the hackneyed groove by the irresistible pull of long habit, as yet unpurged by literary austerity. He cannot express the reverence and sincerity he undoubtedly feels.

Sentiment and Sentimentality

Emotion is useful for raising our hearts to God and, when properly subordinated to the spiritual meaning of a drama, can increase our understanding of holy things. The difference between sentiment and sentimentality is that the former is proper feeling, the latter disordered feeling. Sentimentality is emotionalism for its own sake, or in excess of what the situation demands, or even as a substitute for the spiritual or intellectual.

Sentimentality pervades *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. It is sentiment definitely disordered and illegitimately aroused. Like *The Reader's Digest* it leaves its audience in a state of emotional exhaustion. Emotion is aroused not so much by what is said as by how. Most of the actors are panting all the time, which is meant to convey the intense excitement which is going on. All the cheap acting tricks of the soap opera are used. One is the initial stutter: "I . . . I . . ." "Mary . . . Mary . . ."

... "Ezra . . . Ezra, don't. . . ." That sort of thing. Another trick is jerky speech. Here is Mary saying the Magnificat: "My soul (deep breath) doth magnify (pause, pause) the Lord (deep breath)." Then there is slow talking (to express holiness) and a lot of exclamations. Every scene is played for all it is worth, indeed for much more than its worth at the level of the spiritual comprehension of the dialogue.

The Hour of Saint Francis (blessed relief) is played straight. No one's voice sounds like an exaggerated moan. The meaning and writing, plus the situation, raise feelings without the necessity of resorting to anything besides good acting. The openings and closings of the scripts are sharp and clean; the conclusion is always restrained. This is even true with episodes which are charged with emotional possibilities. There was one in which Saint Francis' humility and charity in caring for a leper effected a miraculous cure of the leprosy. Every effort was obviously made to put restraint into that script, and it ended almost abruptly, as soon as the climax was passed.

Inspiration and Formula

One way to tell a hackneyed radio program is to see if it is written to formula. Formula means that the pattern is so set and standardized that, given the weekly or daily theme, any hack could write the script almost automatically. With programs like *Corliss Archer* one sometimes suspects that any intelligent listener could write the next program, so neat and inevitable is the sequence of events.

The Greatest Story is written to the least inspired of all formulas: simple chronology. It begins. It plods from event to event in natural sequence. It comes at long last to a halt. Sometimes there is not even a well-defined climax.

The Franciscan programs are uniquely without formula. They transmit the ideals of Saint Francis with a constant freshness. Not only are they without formula but they also cast aside (successfully) some of the sacred canons of radio. One script is about "what God looks like" in which a father reads aloud as he writes a letter to his young son. It is practically a fifteen-minute monologue. Now everyone in radio knows that two or three minutes is the longest single speech the audience will tolerate. Yet this went on, with two short episodic interruptions, for a whole script, on a very difficult subject, and held attention.

Radio should take note of these Franciscan programs because they illustrate the freedom and variation which result from having a solid spiritual grasp of a subject. The contrast in this respect between our two programs was especially evident at Christmas because they treated the same subject completely differently. Fulton Oursler, as might be expected, labored through a detailed chronological account of the birth

of Christ, with a few interpolations of his own (the shepherds hunting all over Bethlehem for the stable).

The Franciscans plunged right in, cleanly as always (They have sort of an O. Henry way of giving the whole setting in an opening sentence.): "Night has fallen over the City of Commerce and Thrones, Berkeley. . . ." There you are immediately in New York or Chicago or in any American town on Christmas Eve, with Christ about to be born again to us. Just as in Bethlehem so in the City of Commerce the simple and the learned hastened to adore at the Crib. Thomas Berkeley, a prominent business man, is one with the people in Bethlehem who slept through that night, who through all that glory lay in comfort and indifference. And so the story proceeds, showing how difficult it is for the mediocre to adore—and yet not impossible.

Compromise and Clarity

Each script of *The Greatest Story Ever Told* is said to be censored by a Protestant minister, a Jewish rabbi, and a Catholic priest. If you think this leads to ambiguity of doctrine you are quite right. It does indeed. Christ becomes a sort of emasculated "Master" (with a prolonged broad "a"). How could it be otherwise under commercial sponsorship? It is interesting to watch the effect of this on the program's content. Is Christ man or God-man? Well, that issue is carefully avoided. On one program the necessity was mentioned of "being born again of the Holy Ghost" (not of water and the Holy Ghost). The angels at Christmas sang "Peace on earth and good will among men" in the popular Protestant version. The Lord's Prayer, oddly, does not go beyond the first few phrases. The only moral lessons driven home with any vigor are the vaguish humanitarian ones. Here's religion with lots of emotional content, no supernatural reference, and without any definite dogma. Is that why so many people like the program?

The Franciscans, by pleasant contrast, are precise on their dogma, precise on their moral law. The above-mentioned script about what God looks like was a masterpiece of clarity. It told how nature reflects God without once muddling it with pantheism. As for moral questions they are met head on. The Franciscans don't even promise people that they can have their cake and eat it too. They give them straight stuff. The story is about the governess (Frances) of a child whose mother is insane. The husband falls in love with the governess and proposes. She loves him too. Most of the fifteen minutes is taken up with her tormented thoughts during the night she makes her decision. Here is the part of it:

Frances: (Tries to pray) Arches—empty arches, long, white arches, rows of them . . .

Voice: I fled him down the arches of the years.

Frances: I read that somewhere. The arches of the years. . . .

These are the arches of the years—stretching out before me,
cold and barren and endless, the years without him. . . .

Voice: It's wrong.

Frances: I can't help it. I love him!

Voice: It's wrong.

Frances: I can't go on without him!

Voice: He has a wife—she's still alive.

Frances: She might as well be dead. She's insane. She'll never
be better.

Voice: She is still his wife.

Frances: He loves me now. He'll get a divorce.

Voice: You can't marry a man when his wife is living. It's a sin.

Frances: Is love a sin? I could make him happy—him and the
child. I could be happy. Is that a sin?

Voice: "Whom God has joined together. . . ."

Incidentally, that is good technical use of the radio, which can do
tricks with voices impossible to other media.

The Radio Apostolate

The analysis of these two programs indicates much about the use
of radio for the apostolate. It shows the primacy of the spiritual.
Without holy people, spiritually formed, we can do nothing in the radio
apostolate. With them money, prestige, form and all the other second-
ary things are easily obtained. We have become so overawed by large
concentrations of money and economic power that we underestimate the
power of the spirit.

Another lesson we ought to learn (we should have learned it long
ago) is that big names and popularity and lots of listeners can be as
so much sounding brass. The progress of the Church is not measured
in fanfare but in foolishness, not in money but in martyrs. All the
comfortable bourgeois citizens who have divided their lives neatly be-
tween God and mammon may listen to and applaud a program which
has no spiritually transforming effect whatever.

A last conclusion is that we ought not to complain unduly about
religion's being slighted on the radio until we have learned to purify
our own motives and make proper and apostolic use of the radio
opportunities we have.

PETER MICHAELS



"COULD YOU NOT WA



HOUR WITH ME ?"

After All, It's Your Radio!

"Who's doing all the griping about radio programs?" asked a cent writer in the broadcasting industry's biggest trade magazine. "College professors? . . . Yes. Newspaper columnists? . . . Yes." Asking himself if "Mr. Average Listener" were complaining, he answered, "If he is, I haven't heard it. And the cash register hasn't registered."

"If we were to bow to the recommendations of that minority group industriously haranguing against soap operas, quiz programs, gimmicks, etc.," he went on to ask, "couldn't it well be at the expense of losing the listeners who really count—the less-discriminating, product-purchasing masses?" He concludes, "Radio wouldn't be the billion-dollar industry it is if it had to depend one Hooper-point on the discriminated groups." Radio is supported by and aimed at the masses, not discriminating classes. As long as the 'common touch' is the Golden Touch, why not let the average listener's taste continue to set the programming pace?"

If you think that's bad, if you think there couldn't be any possible lower standard, you're mistaken. Please-the-public-because-it-pays is bad enough but displease-the-public-if-it-pays is even worse. You don't think there can be such a standard? Well, there is. It has to do with what advertisers call "irritation copy." But even if there is such a standard theoretically, you may think, it can't possibly mean anything in actual practice because displeasing the public can't possibly pay.

Not so fast—it does pay! And the broadcasters and the advertisers have hired Ph.D.'s who'll prove it to you. The key to mass selling, they say, lies in impressing your brand name on the public's consciousness, no matter how. Incredible? Then try this on yourself. Suppose your druggist were out of your favorite toothpaste. He has only three brands in stock, two of which you've never heard of in your life, the third a very familiar brand name. Would you stop to think to yourself how it became familiar, whether through advertising that pleased you or irritated you? Probably not. And the odds are that that's the paste you would buy.

If you still find it hard to believe that such a venal, calculating standard actually exists, I'll quote again from radio's biggest trade magazine. Reporting an advertising convention held only last September, this publication recorded one of the findings as follows: "Some radio advertisers believe their commercials must be irritating to be effective or at least believe public protest against their commercials 'prove their effectiveness' and should be totally ignored."

But you don't believe any well-known national advertiser would dare employ such tactics. Haven't you heard any singing commercials

tely? Or take this faithful transcript of a commercial tidbit heard on one of the best network news programs last spring, intoned in radio's most sonorous manner: "From coast to coast this program will observe eight seconds of silence while you make a note to get tablets from your drugstore; eight seconds of silence, eight (ingredients) in one capsule." This was duly followed by the ringing of a bell, the eight seconds of silence, and then the commercial plug all over again. The first time you heard this program, you could hardly believe your ears. Some freshman copy-writer must have slipped it in while the boss was away. But you heard it the next night and the next and the next. Then you heard that public protest had been made on the ground that it was too obvious a takeoff on the minute of supposedly prayerful silence conventionally employed in radio memorial services, and that the sponsor had agreed to change it. You breathed a sigh of relief and waited patiently for days and weeks until the new directive could drift down to the proper level—and finally your patience was rewarded. The commercial was changed. The word "silence" gave way to "quiet," or something like that. The ringing of the bell was omitted and the rest of this bright little commercial went on its way intact, Monday through Friday, week after week.

Admittedly this is the worst side of radio—this and the way informative, elevating programs are shoved into the poor listening hours or off the board altogether by the big bankroll shows with cowcatchers, middle-commercials, hitch-hikes, and by musical clocks with double and triple spotting (said argot merely being the terms of the trade for more and more and more and more strident sales talk, in song and prose, frontwards and backwards).

It is the worst side of radio and it is not, thankfully, universal. But some stations deliberately embrace such practices, on the basis of the philosophy enunciated in the quotation with which this article opened; and nearly all stations and networks suffer from a measure of it.

The more responsible broadcasters are very unhappy about this state of affairs and are trying to do something about it. Not enough, in my opinion, but at least they are headed in the right direction, or want to be. But they cannot clean up the situation unless the advertisers are willing to accept a clean-up, or all stations and networks go in for it together. If one or several try it, against the wishes of the advertisers, the advertisers simply pull their programs off those stations and take them over to the less meticulous stations.

An effort was made to do something about the matter at the broadcasters' convention last September. But first the broadcasters were greeted with a portentous speech by the vice-president-and-general-manager of the biggest time-buyer in radio (1945 billings of over ten

million dollars), who warned that any restrictions on advertising "n reduce seriously the commercial effectiveness of radio," which may taken as indicative of the advertisers' readiness to accept improv standards. The more responsible broadcasters went ahead, nevert less, on plans for a self-regulatory code which would cut down so of radio's excessive commercialism. They even managed to jam su a code through the convention. But their victory was short-lived. T opposition got busy after the delegates went home and long before date on which the code was to go into effect—February 1st—they succeeded in wangling an indefinite postponement and a virtual assurance of some measure of emasculation.

I said that the more responsible broadcasters are headed in right direction—and they are, as regards self-regulation. But the majority of them want self-regulation to replace federal regulation of program standards altogether, and in that I think they are demonstrably wrong—with respect to their own interest in the long view, with respect to the public's interest in any view.

As to the public's interest, I think it's pretty obvious that if Federal Communications Commission is denied the right to set program standards whatever, radio's present abuses are going to grow. The fact that the commission denied license renewal to an anti-Catholic broadcaster years ago has undoubtedly kept a good deal of unfairness and bigotry off the air, and not merely anti-Catholic bigotry. If majority of broadcasters had their way, the commission wouldn't be able to do anything at all about such bigots.

First of all, self-regulation will enable more responsible broadcasters to police only themselves, for I know of no adequate sanctions they can attach to any code which will control their less responsible fellows. In the code tentatively adopted last September, no sanctions were even proposed, thus reducing the whole document to the level of a pious hope. What sanctions could be applied? Only two occurred to me, neither of them adequate: one "the focussing of the spotlight of publicity" on offenders, as proposed by an industry spokesman a year ago, the other, exclusion from the industry's trade association, National Association of Broadcasters. How effective would either sanction be, or both together, against an offender like the late Brinkley, who was thrown off the air by the Federal Radio Commission (federal, not self, regulation there) because he used his facilities chiefly for peddling the goat-gland nostrums which earned him his fame. How effective would either sanction be against an anti-Catholic, or an anti-Semitic, or an anti-Labor broadcaster?

Secondly, we have seen how the practices of the less responsible leave their mark even on the more responsible. As long as there are broadcasters who are willing to accommodate low-standard business

e would-be-high-standard broadcasters will not be able to set their sights as high as they would like for fear of losing some of their accounts to such competition. And the warning delivered to them in September by the official of radio's largest-spending sponsor shows that such a fear is well-grounded.

This should be enough, I believe, to show the inadequacy of self-regulation. But there's a third point, and a most important one, that I wonder if the better broadcasters may not be overlooking. It is that even the worst broadcasters are not presently as bad as some of them would certainly become if they had nothing more effective to curb their greed than a self-regulatory code *sans* sanctions. They do have something more effective to curb them now—moderately—that is, federal regulation. Take that away and their level is bound to sink. And once we have seen that radio, like water, tends in some measure to seek its own level, we can readily surmise the competitive pull this will exercise on even the best broadcasters.

Abolition of federal regulation, in the sense I am talking about, is not desired by all broadcasters but it is very militantly sought by the majority (not technical but *program* regulation). They point out that a free press is one of our proud boasts and insist that we should desire an equally free radio for precisely the same reasons.

The argument is superficially plausible. We do not interfere with freedom of the press simply because there are yellow journals which appeal to the more depraved tastes in their news and editorial columns and carry an excess of shady advertising, nor because there are anti-Catholic, anti-Semitic, anti-Labor, etc., etc., publications. But suppose that Kenneth Leslie's anti-Catholic *Protestant* were the only publication licensed in one community, and William Dudley Pelley's anti-Semitic *iberator* the only one licensed in another, and the NAM house organ the only one licensed in a third. Suppose yellow journals of one kind in another were the only ones—or the only ones of several—licensed in other communities. Or suppose that the very conservative, isolationist *Chicago Tribune* were the only paper licensed to do business on its present vast scale in Chicago, all its competitors being held to restricted size and circulation. Would we have a free press, as we know it now, under such circumstances?

But that is the condition which prevails in radio. There is still only a limited number of channels for broadcasting. That number has grown from about a thousand to several thousand, and the less honest economists for a "radio as free as the press" are pretending that several thousand is *not* "a limited number." They assert, therefore, that the "scarcity of frequencies" is a phony argument for federal regulation. But actually the scarcity problem is worse even than the maximum figure of several thousand would indicate. For if there were only a few very

high power stations available, as there are, the fact that there might be an unlimited number of very low power stations available, as there are, would still leave the "scarcity argument" intact. If the government allowed *The Protestant* or *The Liberator* or the *Chicago Tribune* to have a circulation of fifty thousand over several States, but limited *The Commonwealth* or *The Jewish Daily Forward* or *The Chicago Daily* to a circulation of a hundred or two hundred or one thousand in a single precinct, we wouldn't have a free press. So when it is said that there are "plenty of frequencies" remember that this means only a few thousand at most, that less than thirty of these can accommodate the 50,000-watt stations licensed to broadcast around the compass around the clock on clear channels, and that most of the rest of them are 250- or 500- or 1000-watts or less, licensed to broadcast to certain points of the compass, or during a limited part of the day, or on channels shared with other stations.

The majority of the broadcasters claim that federal regulation is unconstitutional. Now, if they really meant that, they would have no argument. But they don't really mean that; they only mean that certain aspects of federal regulation *which they don't like* are unconstitutional. When they say that "free speech" in the First Amendment necessarily comprehends "free speech by means of radio," they don't mean that such free speech is guaranteed to all who enjoy the protection of the Constitution. If they did, they'd have to agree that all beneficiaries of constitutional safeguards must be allowed to broadcast freely, anywhere, is, wherever they want, at whatever power they want, on whatever channel they want. But the broadcasters now have exclusive rights to broadcast on their assigned frequencies in their assigned localities, and they don't want those exclusive rights interfered with. So they ask, and even demand, that the government has the right to regulate broadcasting to the extent of protecting their preferential privileges.

If "free speech" in the First Amendment means "free speech by means of radio," then it applies as much to the many thousands of applicants to broadcast whose applications have been denied as it does to the few thousand applicants whose applications have been granted. The broadcasters can't have it both ways.

In one case brought before the Supreme Court, a case in which the broadcasters challenged the right of the Federal Communications Commission to lay down rules other than those related to "technical engineering," the Supreme Court said: "The Regulations, even if valid in all other respects, must fail because they abridge, say through the denial of licenses to broadcast, the right of free speech of the applicants (the broadcasters), their right of free speech. If that be so, it would follow that every person whose application for a license to operate a station is denied by the Commission is thereby denied his constitutional right of free speech."

Whatever else one may say about the broadcasters' inability or disposition to understand this clear and simple language, one can be very sure that their fight to get radio blanketed in under the First Amendment is short-sighted, even from the standpoint of their own personal interests. If they can persuade the Congress to abolish FCC program regulation on the basis of the First Amendment, the next step, and it will happen inevitably, will be for some applicant whose application for a radio license has been denied to challenge FCC's frequency regulation on the same basis. And even though the Congress were to relent, and to allow the broadcasters to have it both ways, as they are now seeking to do, one can be confident the courts would not be so complacent. If the First Amendment applies here, the broadcasters will almost certainly lose their exclusive frequencies.

Should the public relax and let George do it—George being the FCC and the Congress? By no means. The abuses that now prevail on radio prevail under FCC regulation—and without inspiring any remedial action by the Congress. But the fault, I think, is the public's. The FCC apparently wants to do the right thing, as demonstrated in the famous "Blue Book" it issued a year ago last March (everyone ought to read this most significant radio document). But it finds itself subjected to tremendous and unceasing pressure from the broadcasters, with no compensating support from the public whose interests it is defending.

Thus when the Senate held committee hearings on a new radio law last spring, the industry was there *en masse* to demand that Congress limit FCC's regulatory powers. The number of organizations which had representatives there to testify on behalf of the public in favor of retention of FCC's regulatory powers over program balance, equal treatment of both sides of controversial public issues, excessive commercialism, etc., was negligible. That makes it tough for FCC, and tough for Congress too.

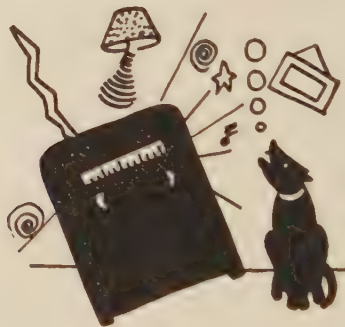
Incidentally, another important public hearing is coming up in March. It concerns the right of the broadcaster to "editorialize." FCC held either that a broadcaster could not editorialize on behalf of his own views at all, or that he could not do so without according those differing viewpoints free access to his microphone. Unless the public shows some interest, FCC may feel obliged to capitulate to the pressure applied by the broadcasters, and give them the right to editorialize as they please. Such a concession, if it happens, would not only give tremendous editorial powers to the broadcasters, but would in many cases deny the opposition any opportunity to broadcast.

The public doesn't seem to realize that radio is its own rightful possession, not the private property of the broadcasters to do with as they will. Everyone hears criticisms of broadcasting on every hand. How many of these critics ever express their displeasure to the station

or the network? I mentioned the offensive "eight seconds of silence" commercial, which the sponsor was finally persuaded to change (though imperceptibly) on the basis of public protests. Remember, this was a coast-to-coast program, five nights a week, at an extremely good listening hour. How many protests were there? *Five!*

The radio channels are public property. Some of the logic-choppers in the industry contest this statement because they say there's nothing there to own. But a right may be property, even if it's intangible. However, if it will give them any satisfaction, let us agree that at least the frequencies are not private property, that the use of them is reserved to whomever the representatives of the public, the Congress, wish to grant such use, and on such terms as may be prescribed. The right to such use is extremely valuable, radio being a very profitable business. In return for such favors the public is entitled to some reasonable *pro quo*. It is entitled to *good* radio service.

EDWARD J. HEFFRON



IN MY LIVING ROOM

I don't like Rinso songs or whistles
Or calculated claps and cheers,
But what I don't like most of all
Are chants of Southern auctioneers!

The Sale

of Brains



Among the newer commodities on the market these days, is heated enthusiasm at so much per calorie. Alongside this rare buy we find chuckles, laughs, pleasantries, and quips—also for sale. Songs and jingles about anything from soup to nuts rendered by duets, trios, quartets or symphonic ensembles, are to be had for a specified number of coins of the realm. The customers in this mad exchange are the sponsors of radio broadcasts. The com-

modities are the intellectual and artistic talents of the "brains" behind the microphone.

I once worked beside an ex-wood carver in a mass-production factory. It was his habit to maintain an unbroken silence while at his bench. One day the foreman patted him on the shoulder and said, "Cheer up, Joe, things can't be as bad as all that." Joe paused in his work and waved his hammer menacingly under the nose of the foreman. "Listen here," he said, "it isn't bad enough for me, a craftsman, to have to do this crazy work, but now I should *like* it!"

The entire shop enjoyed this remark immensely, not only because it was amusing, but because it was true. Selling his skill was one thing, churning out quantity instead of quality work, sacrificing skill to the mad insistence of the clock, that was bad enough, but, his *enthusiasm*, that was his last sacred possession. He would save that for those dignified moments at his own home workbench. His enthusiasm was not for sale.

All men are not so particular as Joe. The last honorable bastion left to the worker has been surrendered. Now, enthusiasm, delight, stimulation, praise—all of these—are priced and traded. The modern bard strums his harp and sings the praises of Sheepfat Hair Oil. The Parntheses of Radio City elocutes in pear-shaped tones about Chrysler and Crisco. The Bard of N.B.C. articulates trippingly upon the tongue concerning the quality of pea soup that is not strained but droppeth the gentle rain upon the palate. Poets burn the midnight kilowatts

poring through the masterpieces of their classical brethren, abstract phrases in praise of God or nature that will be sufficiently superlative to describe the cheese-flavored wax to which hallowed service they have dedicated their pens.

Distasteful as the term may be, it is only calling a spade a spade to classify this insincere, hypocritical, and wanton perversion of intellectual gifts as prostitution. It is a prostitution of a more degrading kind than the kind reputedly worse than death. The exchange of brains for money requires a more thorough dedication to the Prince of Liars, a more abusive perversion of faculties than is exercised in the saloons and bodies. The very senses that God has given us for the perception and expression of truth, are marshalled under the dominion of the sportsman and forced to grimace and cavort before an audience of millions to the jingle of coins. A man, who is the image of God, chooses to use every faculty in which the image is manifest, his intellect, as a mirror to reflect the exaggerated glories of canned vegetables, and this notwithstanding the reverence for the beneficent God Who made the vegetables, but only of esteem for the dollar-laden man who canned them.

The personal and social consequences of this perversion of talent is harmful both to the person and to society. Take, for example, the case of the commercial announcer. As he emotes and brays about Mother Merton's Marmalade, the effectiveness of his message (and of course, the retention of his job) depends upon his winning first the friendship of his audience. This maneuver is repulsively but accurately called "selling himself." It is a fatuous display of friendly motives if you will, turning on the charm and giving out with the schmaltz. He as much as says: "Listen to me. Would anyone with as nice a charming a manner as I, with my fresh masculinity and boyish delicacy, have anything but your best interest at heart? Notice closely, I have no provincial or foreign accent. I am obviously a hundred per cent American just like yourself. Notice also that I am not too snobbish to say 'ya' or 'yer' when I mean 'you' or 'your.' Just an ordinary regular guy—that's me! (Of course, if I were selling a product to the exclusive trade and not the *mass* trade, I would revert back to the carefully enunciated 'you' and 'your' with just a touch of Harvard in the vowels.) You, knowing me as well as you do, could you doubt for a moment my perfectly normal enthusiasm for Mother Merton's Marmalade, that bonny sunshine made from the fruit that grows on the top of the tree where nasty worms can't reach it, that delectious, delectable, taste-tempting—! !"

The announcer's stock in trade, much as that of the goat at the stock-yard, is a rare gift of persuasion. In exchange for the use of it he is well kept. As a prostitute he resembles more the courtesan than the streetwalker. Like the court mistress he is farther from hunger

er dressed than society's nobility. He lives familiarly with the great, again like the court mistress his corruption is not of one man, but an entire society.

Any society and especially one that aspires to be democratic must guard carefully the trust that one man places in another man's spoken word. Without this trust, communication of ideas becomes impossible. It is this very trust which the radio man violates when he uses our gullibility as a knife to slit our wallet. From hour to hour he hardly bows to what he is going to bear witness, but bear witness he does in equal vehemence whether the script talks of patriotic duties or the properties of shave-cream.

Intellectual prostitution sins against truth just as physical prostitution sins against love. When either becomes widespread and socially accepted, the attitude of such a society toward objective truth and true values changes. Always intangible, these qualities proper to God, and but rarely and imperfectly manifested by men, lose whatever attraction they have as objective goods in proportion to the willingness with which men publicly dishonor them.

To exaggerate the beautifying effects of a face cream is in itself a trivial thing far less serious than, for instance, lying about the healthfulness of debilitated bread, but neither of these evils is as important as the fact that a man would do so, not out of love, not out of ignorance, not out of hunger, but simply and solely for money. The social effects of this prostitution would not be so great either, were it not an hour-after-hour, day-after-day, nation-wide phenomenon. It is not surprising that such laxity in their elders should provoke in our children a cynical, nose-cracking scepticism about every display of enthusiasm. Nor is it surprising that an educational system geared to the *job* and rating intellectual prostitution high because of its earning powers, should eject managers into the social system who will glibly and charmingly sell any talent that the market can use.

Although the announcer exhibits most convincingly the detestable willingness to sell out for a price, his is not the only knee that bows to the monarch of money. The M.C. on the audience-participation shows takes as his gleeful occupation the business of spreading the disease into the audience. Like a cheerful Typhoid Mary, he infects others with the slow blight. From all walks of life, people come and endure his continuous banter and then proceed to make fools of themselves in the hope that the god of ten-per-cent will shower his blessings upon them. The M.C. will seize upon stupidity and ridicule it, upon cupidity and encourage it. He will wring the last drop from the emotional rag when a medal-bedecked veteran or a gold-star mother comes up to join in the "fun," the kind of fun that would be a one-man show if the benefactor hand of the sponsor were stayed.

The writers, particularly the ones who write the daily soap operas, capitulate to the sponsors by prostituting their art. They mass-produce the scripts regardless of the laws of esthetics. The scripts are manufactured much as mother makes cookies. Out of the rolled-dough neurotic human experience, they cookie-cut the daily show. The cutting tool is the indispensable "formula." As long as the house is left, at the end of the script, highly concerned about Aunt Polly's disappearance, or Lorenzo Jones' strange visitor, just long enough that the "plug" can be pushed into her gaping mouth, the scriptwriter's work is done.

The actors are another story. As we analyze the nature of their relations with radio, we must make the distinction between the wit and legitimate pretense native to acting, as contrasted with the insincerity of the announcer. Between an actor and his audience there is a preliminary tacit agreement that his role as actor lies in the realm of the make-believe. Part of the pleasure of the theatre is the subordinated but ever-present understanding that the drama is not *really* true. The same does not hold in the case of the announcer, nor of the M.C. The men are performing a real function in real life. The products advertised are real and so is the money with which they are purchased. The only make-believe thing in their relations with the audience is their mock sincerity.

The intellectual prostitution of the radio actors is less than that of the announcer, and, of course, in many cases, they fulfill a perfectly good function in complete artistic sincerity. Their worst offense, as a group, is the manner in which they defame their art by perpetuating the dramatic character which they *must* know should best have died with the first script. They aid and abet (for example) the writer of "soap operas" in continuing his unresolved situations. The character is seldom, if ever, brought to a satisfactory finality as demanded by logic, art, or morality. I do not think it would be stretching my analogy to say that the intellectual prostitution of the writers is manifest in their characters. Like the mad woman of easy virtue, the "soapie" character proceeds from one emotional crisis to another, enduring an eternal hell in which struggles and pain are never a prelude to life or to death.

The sponsor presides over this house of intellectual prostitution with his own purity of intention inviolate. Viewing the dress rehearsal from his comfortable booth, he coldly and unemotionally examines every word, tone, and gesture not for its æsthetic or moral propriety but according to the austere logic of the cash register. Behind him is no compelling muse, nor anything so intangible as the Spirit of Truth. His duty to society is to get its restless jaws chomping, puffing and gargling his product. No truth will he permit to enter the microphone that has not first been sterilized. "We mustn't stir up, embarrass

voke any class or group of people. As far as we are concerned there are no Catholics, no Jews, no Negroes, no Democrats, no Republicans, all potential customers of our glorious product."

Genius, to the sponsor, is something to be milked dry of new ideas, and then put to work adding endless variations to the theme that sells. The appeal and charm of the chanteuse and announcer have no effect upon the sponsor. "Save," says he, "the oil for the customers."

Whatever radio may be *potentially*, this is what it is *actually*. An instrument for molding public opinion has been oriented to profit in such a way that the dynamism of genius and the compulsion of truth are screened through the sieve of utilitarianism. Public opinion, and the oracular prophecy, the instruments by which a democracy perfects or destroys itself, have been dropped like balls of clay into the hands of the technicians who boast of never being moved by anything other than ulterior motives. This is the *big* problem in American radio.

ED WILLOCK

THERESE

The hope has gone out of me
Like wine from a broken flagon.
What Saint shall I pray to now—
Saint George before the dragon?
No, but a slender girl
In a heavy dress of brown
Whose cry to her Love once tore
The walls of darkness down.

SISTER M. BERNETTA QUINN, O.S.F.



LIFE COULD BE BEAUTIFUL

Things would sure be looking up
And efforts be well spent,
If Mother Mary's life were known
As well as Helen Trent's.

The Catholic Converted

The battle for faith and truth and God is always interesting. That why we have so many accounts of the conversions of non-Catholics to Catholicism. In his autobiography Chesterton tells how he stooped and stepped through the low door into the infinite expanse of the Church, looking for a confessional. There is Alfred Noyes becoming acquainted with the *Unknown God*. Ronald Knox tells how he won and wandered into the fold after *A Spiritual Aeneid*, and Arnold Bennett tells how he debated with Father Knox and, in losing the debate, gained a clear picture of Catholicism, exclaiming with the man born and bred, *Now I See*. The deep, locked secrets of souls have been revealed by Saint Augustine in his *Confessions* and Cardinal Newman in his *Apologia*. So many and so varied are the stories that collections of them have come out telling how men came in *Through a Hundred Gates*.

But seldom, if ever, is the story told of the conversion of a Catholic to Catholicism. Often, it is true, it is hinted at in the lives of the Saints speaking of a "conversion" which the Saint himself insisted he had, but at the same time it is almost as often insinuated that we mustn't take such things too seriously. Such a conversion ought to be taken seriously, must be taken seriously if the subsequent life of sanctity is to be understood or appreciated or even believed. For it is the conversion of a Catholic to Catholicism. It is inspiring, challenging, enlightening, and exciting to see what happens when a man comes into a church; it is no less interesting to see what happens when a man wakes up in one.

The world in which Catholics grow up has always tended to substitute something or someone for God. Today God is given as little concern as possible in "real life," in the relations between nations, races, and individuals. He is not openly opposed; He is silently ignored. Men have a great deal of faith—in themselves, a great deal of confidence in their own power to settle problems and find happiness without going the way the finger of God directs. Modern advertising has done its best to convince us that health and wealth, both "goods" but neither "ends" are the "be all" and the "end all" of our life. How different the good is from the best, how different the means from the end is something even Catholics can go a long time before realizing. Anyone who has grown up in the last generation has felt the lure of a gold brick and the fallacy of a fine physique as an ultimate end in the realm of ideals. A person can wear the label "Catholic" a long time before he finds out that Catholicism is a veneer, not part of his substance. This veneer of Catholicism can be showy, rich in color and looking like anything but a veneer until it is chipped or cut deep; then it shows what is underneath.

Perhaps suddenly, perhaps after a long period of trial or action the

challenging question of what the Church means if it means anything at all appears. It may be expressed negatively: What if Christ is wrong? What if the Church is wrong? What if I am wrong in believing in Christ? At the same time there is present a more powerful thought. A person is face to face with the really startling questions: What if Christ is right? What if the Church is right? What if the Church is really the Mystical Body of Christ? What if I can be happy only by seeking God?

Not that the issue is always as clearly seen as this. Perhaps so when one has died. The cold, hard reality of death can have a striking effect on anyone, does have a striking effect on anyone who feels suddenly the loss of what seems a *sine qua non* of happiness. There is an emptiness to fill. Catholicism proves its power, not by bringing back the dead but by filling up the present and providing for the future with the tremendous reality of God.

The circumstances which awaken the Catholic in the Church are as varied as are those which lead a non-Catholic into it. The reaction of what Catholicism means can be summed up in the story of Michaelangelo and his statue, in reverse. Michaelangelo is said to have struck his newly chiseled statue of Moses urging it: "Speak!" so life came into it. To be struck by Catholicism is just the opposite. It is as if one is being tapped by what one thought was a statue and spoken to by what one thought was inarticulate stone. After going through the motion of being a Catholic we suddenly see the Church as Someone instead of something. We find we are a part of an organism, not just an organization, a member of a Body, not just a wheel in a machine.

What does the conversion to Catholicism mean? It means we begin to take a Christ-lit view of things. We begin to see things as they really are, not as advertisers would like us to see them. We are no longer unable to see the end because of always having the means thrust at us. We stop building our views on the shifting sands of public opinion and the "fence-philosophy" of the dailies, and begin building on the solid rock of Catholic principles found in the papal encyclicals and other Church pronouncements. It is no longer a case of "What the Pope and I agree, I know he's right!" We begin to pray with the Church, through Christ, not to a giant Santa Claus for gifts, but to a personal friend with mutual love and understanding, as a bride speaks to a bridegroom. What seemed to be the chain of Catholic moral precepts seen to be the yoke of Christ. The dead letter of Church teaching changed into the living pattern of our lives.

What does the conversion to Catholicism mean? It means that God comes into our "real life," and we really begin to live. When we read of the great services to God the Saints perform and the great services to the Saints God performs we are tempted to ask: How do the

To what religion do they belong? Isn't there a super-Catholicism, the other Church in which they worship that we, the "hoi polloi," don't know about?

Marie Antoinette Geuser, a French lay mystic of this century, answered emphatically "No!" when shortly before her death she summed up her sanctity by saying simply, "I am a Catholic!" and repeating, "I am a Catholic!" She wanted to impress the bystanders with the fact that her holiness, her highly infused prayer was the result of her being no more than a Catholic, made her no more than a Catholic; only made her more truly one. What she said was as simply true as was startlingly simple. There is no super-religion, no special Church wherein the Saints worship. There is only Catholicism and the Catholic Church that is of Christ, the Church that is His Mystical Body. We do not have to hunt for a new religion; we have but to see the power and splendor of our own and we will have our hands full, our hearts full, and our lives full.

JOHN GLENNON

This Is Catholic Press Month

We realize that during Be Kind to Juvenile Delinquents Month we failed to raise our voices in favor of the younger, higher-type criminal which our society is producing so abundantly. We displayed a similar negligence during Don't Beat Your Children Month, not because we don't think it's a grand idea—as a matter of fact we do.

But Catholic Press Month is different! INTEGRITY, we think, is helping in some way to make the Catholic Press an effective instrument for good. If you think so too, tell your friends about it and, if you like, give them a four-months' trial subscription for a dollar.

SUNDAY MASS

I will arise this Sunday morning early
And I'll walk a few short blocks to Mass.
The streets are quiet and sunny; thousands sleep
On our block, but a score or more are up
And nearly all are going my way.

Good morning, Mrs. Murphy, and how is little Willie?
He's fine, thank God. I hope the sermon's not too long.
Say a prayer we get a short one—we're going
Down to Rockaway and I've got to pack a lunch.
Sure—today will be a scorcher!

The smell from Hagen's Bar and Grill,
This fine, bright Sunday morning,
Would prompt a man to take the pledge.
Stale beer and last night's tobacco
And through that vapid blend
A sharp, strong disinfectant.
It's hard to say which smelled the worse
The antidote or the poison.

I'll dip my hand into the font of blessed water
And sign myself this morning.
The font is old and many hands have dipped in it
Till the very marble has been worn by the
Grimy hands and soft white hands, young and old hands,
Hands of saints and sinners,
And the waters still are cleansing.
I genuflect and settle back into the smooth worn pew:
The Mass begins.

I'll besiege the altar with prayer
And my prayer will be joined by thousands:
Tim lost his job, Lord, and Mom's pretty sick,
Mary's husband is drinking again; God,
Keep me pure and help me hold my temper
In the subway all next week.

The priest's voice is strong and sonorous as
He says the Latin prayers for all of us,
And the rosaries keep clicking all around.
Suddenly the sun breaks through a cloud,
Rays fall sharply on the altar glowing white:
The stained glass windows burn in crimson
And deep bright blue,
And Mary's figure seems glorified!

Dear Lord, I love this old parish church.
It's grand! Majestically beautiful!
And yet, it's familiar and a simple home
To all of us poor people.
Dear Lord, there used to be more of us,
Many, many more of us here on Sunday morn.
Sure a lot have moved uptown, but then
There are many others still on the block.

their heads are too heavy
 their spirits too far down
 think of Mass this morning.
 Sometimes I wonder there aren't more of us
 the easy fleshy way.
 When you think, Lord, of the subways—
 summer days—young bodies crowded close,
 voluptuous dames in suggestive ads
 shaving soaps;
 the beer flows fast and in its haze
 the girls are so alluring—
 a dull job and a dingy flat
 make any escape inviting.
 Many good guys, old pals, have gone
 the easy way.
 Sometimes the whole darned city
 seems like a sucking-slimy pit:
 those times life is just a heavy dragging.
 I'm trying, dear God, I'm truly trying:
 me, Lord, help me, wash me, hold me tight!
 When vigorously the altar boy shakes his cluster of bells
 and all of us kneel in obedient adoration:
 Priests, all, we bow before the sinner's holy God.
 Then, more gently now, the boy with bells
 calls us to attention
 and God is held aloft,
 cradled in priestly fingers.
 Dear Lord, You are with us now upon the holy altar
 and all our sinful heavy sorrow
 is lifted up, offered
 with Your crucified desolation.
 When that shiny-faced lad rings his bells again
 and I go up, and God comes down
 to the altar rail.
 Here I kneel, elbow to elbow between
 the youngest nun and old man Flanagan.
 When back to my pew I carry God in me,
 the glorious triumphant body of Christ
 in my weak and dirty frame.
 That He loves to rest on my troubled heart
 and we talk then, man to man.
 And the peace of Christ and His strength of soul
 are mine when the Mass is over.
 When with a jaunty air and head held high
 down the street I go to buy some buns
 and pick up the morning paper
 and deep in my heart I'm certain
 and deep in my heart I'm sure,
 no soft-eyed wench, no pull of the mob
 no yen for drink, no monotonous job
 no weakness within nor power without
 can separate me from the loving Christ
 now or forever.

Amen.

BOOK REVIEWS

Desire For God

THE ETERNAL QUEST

By William R. O'Connor
Longmans Green, \$4.00

This book is concerned with the statement and defense of an hypothesis, proposed to solve an old and important problem, which has been a source of division among Thomistic

philosophers, concerning a natural desire for the vision of God. Commentators, great and small, have been, and are, at variance on this point of Thomistic doctrine. Father O'Connor offers the explanation that the difficulties lie, less in the text of the Angelic Doctor, than in the preoccupations and assumptions of the interpreters, who have been influenced by the newer ideas and terms of their own day. It is time to re-examine the text itself.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, the author considers the four main schools of interpretation, those of Banez, Cajetan, Soto and Sylvester of Ferrara. In the second part, he traces the teaching of Saint Thomas on the natural desire for knowledge and the natural desire for happiness, as it is found in the text.

Father O'Connor points out that there are seeming contradictions in the text itself. First, Saint Thomas asserts, in many places, the existence of a natural desire to see God in Himself, yet he seems to contradict this very point in other passages. Actually, this is only an apparent contradiction, disappearing when one understands the use of the word "natural" in each instance. The second difficulty is real, and arises because Saint Thomas denies that any created intellect can arrive at the Beatific Vision without divine help, but also asserts that it is natural for the human intellect to attain this vision, once the soul is free of the body at death.

Each of the four leading interpretations is carefully examined, and the author lays bare the extraneous elements, which conspired to complicate the issue. A case in point would be the influence of Duns Scotus' conception of the will upon the teaching of Soto.

After showing Saint Thomas' indebtedness to Aristotle for his concept of nature and natural desire, Father O'Connor goes on to establish his thesis, which stated simply is this. Saint Thomas teaches that every intellectual creature has a natural desire to see God, after it knows that God exists. He also teaches the existence of a natural desire for happiness, but he never taught that we have a natural desire for God *as the object that constitutes our happiness*. Saint Thomas, unlike many of his interpreters, never confused the natural desire of the intellect for knowledge, with the natural desire of the will for happiness.

Father O'Connor is to be commended for his careful scholarship, as well as the clarity and precision of his thought. By making the proper distinctions, he has shed much light on an obscure portion of Thomistic doctrine. While it might be too much to say that all controversy on this point has been ended, it is certain that this book is of major importance. The author has brought credit not only on himself, but on the Church in America as well.

REV. VINCENT J. CAMPBELL

Thomism Without Tears

NATURE, KNOWLEDGE AND GOD

by Brother Benignus, F.S.C.

price, \$4.50

As this book has over six hundred pages of solid philosophical matter, it might be well for this reviewer to admit at the start that he has not yet read it all, and that even if he had he would not be competent to evaluate it as a Thomistic theologian, weighing against all the other learned books which explain Saint Thomas with abbreviations or additions. This is not a scholar's review but a student's view—the judgment of a lay, would-be Thomist with apostolic rather than academic pretensions. For such, then, is Brother Benignus' book useful?

It is not only useful, it is a delight! It does with Saint Thomas' material what Saint Thomas himself probably would have done contemporarily. After explaining Saint Thomas' position clearly, he considers the relevant modern philosophical position and also the latest findings of science which are considered to bear on the subject (often they are irrelevant to the philosophical position and it is very useful to know that too). There is throughout the book an ease of development which shows what a thorough and deep understanding the author has of his material. Similarly, his explanations are extremely clear. And, like a good teacher, he repeats. He's always tying the new principle with the old principle, or viewing a previously explained point from a slightly different angle. You get so you count on these repetitions to help your mind reach philosophical comprehension.

This book covers all of Saint Thomas except the moral theology and that part dealing with revelation. It is chiefly metaphysics and psychology. It's not a condensation of Saint Thomas; it's more an elaboration, with omissions. That's why it's so helpful. It goes over and over, for instance, the matter of hylomorphism (the relationship between matter and form) and the proofs for the existence of the soul. This is the material which is especially hard for modern man to grasp. On

the other hand, he skips any detailed treatment of the passions, referring you to the relevant parts of Saint Thomas' *Summa* (which cover some one hundred large pages in the new Benziger translation). Thaw, wise, because there is nothing difficult about the passions if you read Saint Thomas with care. So it seems as though Brother Benignus has chosen his points of emphasis out of deference to the empty and difficult spots in the modern mind, always reinforcing the foundation doubly. He knows what doctrinal errors to combat today which are not always the same errors as in the thirteenth century. He knows the state of modern science, which is very important. All this he synthesizes with such obvious ease that the reader takes courage: "Maybe it's not forever beyond me, either!"

Those who are searching Saint Thomas (or ought to be) for philosophical studies, or for the comprehensive world view that an educational apostle has to have to turn a secular society Christ-ward, will find a treasure in this book. Using it in connection with Saint Thomas' need only Garrigou-Lagrange's works on the anatomy of the supernatural life, and a lot of time to study, to become vastly more valuable than, say, the President of Harvard.

PETER MICHAELS

A Valiant Woman

SAINT JANE FRANCES FREMYOT DE CHANTAL

Her Exhortations, Conferences and Instructions

Newman, \$3.75

Even as a little girl Saint Jane Frances Fremyot de Chantal's thoughts were of God. Her biographers tell of an incident in her childhood when she was a child of five, which gives us an insight into the depth of holiness to which this child of grace was destined: Her father was entertaining a distinguished gentleman friend whose views on Catholicism were heretical: during the discussion the little girl listened attentively. When the guest was leaving, he presented the child with a few sugar plums, whereupon she took the proffered sweets and threw them into the fire, stating that that is what would happen to all heretics—"they would burn in hell!"

It is not strange, then, that such a child should grow into a courageous woman who, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, would lead other souls to a life of perfection.

In her *Exhortations* she urges her spiritual daughters to recognize their own nothingness and to throw themselves completely on God, ever keeping before their minds the end for which they were created. Her *Conferences*, given while in assemblies, are her answers to the sisters' queries as to the most direct route to be traversed on this road

ection. Here is an excerpt from one such conference: "A soul
ch studies, both by reading, meditation, conferences and other ways
now the greatness of the religious state, goes forward and profits
and the rest, and that because it destroys ignorance, the great source
evil, and acquires knowledge, which is the first step toward the good
ch the religious state offers it." Her *Instructions* are to the Novice
ress to lead the novices to a life of love, and to inculcate in them a
re to "die daily to self," to penetrate the depth of the love of their
sacred Lord.

This is a book that can be picked up and opened at random and
reader, whether religious or lay, will find some spiritual nutrition
ch will carry him through his daily work, meditating on the simplic-
of life if we but "lose everything in God."

M. F. K.

Why the Cross?

THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE CROSS OF JESUS

Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.
Hardcover, \$4.00

This is a work on ascetical theology with a preliminary discussion
of some of the underlying doctrine. The second part deals directly with
spiritual life and in the author's usual excellent manner. He always
gives the theological reason for things, citing Saint Thomas and Saint
John of the Cross (showing, too, the harmony between the two), and
applies them simply, with examples, so that they are readily under-
stood. As usual, there is that extraordinary clarity with which Garrigou-
Lagrange always treats of the relationship between the natural and the
supernatural. He is dealing with the necessity of mortification and its
contribution to spiritual progress.

The first section is a doctrinal treatise on the problem of pure love
(What do we owe to love God more than ourselves?). The ordinary reader
may have difficulty following this through, not because the answer is
not clearly made but because it is given only after the consideration
and refutation of all non-Thomistic erroneous views of the subject.

CAROL JACKSON

Timely Essays

ESSAYS

Alice Meynell
Newman, \$2.75

Of Alice Meynell, G. K. Chesterton once wrote:
"She was deservedly famous; but I will venture to
prophesy that her fullest fame is yet to come. The
whole modern world must immeasurably enlarge
itself before it comes near to the measure of her mind."

We are therefore fortunate that the Newman Bookshop has pub-
lished a new collection of Alice Meynell's essays in honor of the cen-

tenary of her birth; for, although they were born in the post-Victorian era, they apply with as great a moral and intellectual force to our modern way of life today.

It would be a bold reviewer, indeed, who would take exception to Mrs. Meynell's literary style. One finds a compactness of prose, succinctness that is rare in the essay; and any young person who would write will find his resources tremendously enriched after reading these delightful essays.

The essence of Alice Meynell's life (and, consequently, of her writing) was love, but a love tempered with a fine discrimination and a critical intellectuality. Of this her son, Sir Francis Meynell, writes in the introduction: "There were in fact three great relevances in Alice Meynell's life, leaving no voids craving to be filled. Religion, literature and family—and she was all lover for all these."

This love did not remain concentrated. It overflowed to the things of the world: *Rushes and Reeds*, *Wells*, and the wild grasses; the defied Roman officials who would have none of *Ceres' Runaway* in the city. It was lavished on mankind's more unfortunate members—the gypsies—in *Have Patience*, *Little Saint*; and it was bestowed upon a general, and "the nimble art of Japan" in particular, in *Symmetry Incident*.

It is as a mother that she reaches the zenith of the prose of her life. Mrs. Meynell had eight children, and it is evident from the final group of essays on *The Darling Young* that she was the kindest, most devoted, most understanding of mothers. "To attend to a living child," she writes, "is to be baffled in your humour, disappointed of your plans, and set freshly free from all the pre-occupations."

It is fitting that the book should close on the note of young people, for these essays will always remain young, fresh and penetrating to every new generation.

MARY ELEANOR JONES

The Last Words of Aquinas

COMPENDIUM OF THEOLOGY

By St. Thomas of Aquinas

Trans. by Cyril Vollert, S.J.

Herder, \$4.00

Although this work of St. Thomas was never finished, it has great value for two reasons. It is the product of his most mature years, and was interrupted by his death; and it was written as a summary of his thought on theology. St. Thomas based his exposition of Catholic doctrine on the three theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. He was able to finish only the virtue of faith and a few chapters on the virtue of hope. What we have of this work makes us regret that the American Doctor never had an opportunity to complete it.

J. V. C.

THOUGHTS on

FEBRUARY

Catholic Press Month

Sinners have been started on the road to sainthood by the casual reading of Catholic literature . . . Saint Francis de Sales, patron of the Catholic Press, used the printed word to convert whole communities, to reach the heretic who would not listen . . . His Holiness Pope Pius XI said of the Catholic Press, "You are my voice."

Reading the MARIANIST will not guarantee you a crown

in Heaven. It will not guarantee you a crown

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scription for that special friend
with whom you most frequently
exchange thoughts and ideas.

**BUT I TELL YOU,
THAT OF EVERY IDLE WORD
MEN SPEAK, THEY SHALL GIVE
ACCOUNT ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT
FOR BY THY WORDS THOU WILT BE
JUSTIFIED, AND BY THY WORDS
THOU WILT BE CONDEMNED.**



Matthew 12 : 36.37